

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A terminal management device for managing costs related to terminal devices, said terminal management device comprising:

5 a storing unit storing management information for classifying each terminal device by the combination type of at the least one business entity bearing the costs related to the terminal device; and

10 a managing unit managing the sharing of costs related to each terminal device based on said combination type.

15 2. The terminal management device according to claim 1, wherein said management information includes the shared cost or proportional share of business entities in each combination type, and when said combination type is changed relative to each terminal device, said managing unit computes for each business entity the difference between 20 the cost, which each business entity corresponding to the combination type of prior to the change is already bearing, and the cost, which each business entity corresponding to the combination type of subsequent to the change will bear.

25 3. The terminal management device according to claim 2, wherein, when said combination type is changed relative to each terminal device, the combination type of each

terminal device stored in said management information is updated to the combination type of subsequent to the change, said managing unit executes said computation relative to all terminal devices for which said combination type was updated.

4. The terminal management device according claim 1, wherein each terminal device is capable of connecting to a network.

5. The terminal management device according to claim 2, wherein each terminal device is capable of connecting to a network, and

said terminal management device further comprises a communicating unit receiving via a network a network connection request from each terminal device, and, when said combination type is changed relative to each terminal device, the combination type of each terminal device stored in said management information is updated to the combination type of subsequent to the change,

said managing unit executes said computation relative to the terminal device(s) which sent the network connection request.

6. The terminal management device according to claim 1, wherein each terminal device is capable of connecting to a network,

said terminal management device further comprises a communicating unit receiving an combination type stored beforehand in a terminal device with a network connection request from the terminal device, and

5 when said combination type is changed relative to each terminal device, the combination type of each terminal device stored in said management information is updated to the combination type of subsequent to the change,

10 said managing unit compares said received combination type with the terminal device combination type stored in said management information, and in the case of a match, sends to the terminal device information corresponding to the combination type, and in a case that there is not a match, sends to the terminal device information corresponding to the combination type stored in said management information, and furthermore, by sending to the terminal device the combination type of subsequent to said change, updates the combination type stored in the terminal device to the combination type of subsequent to said change.

20 7. The terminal management device according to claim 1, wherein each terminal device is capable of connecting to a network,

25 said terminal management device further comprises a communicating unit receiving an combination type sent from a terminal device with a network connection request from the terminal device, and

5        said managing unit compares said received combination type with the terminal device combination type stored in said management information, and in the case of a match, sends to the terminal device information corresponding to the combination type, and in a case that there is not a match, sends to the terminal device information corresponding to said received combination type, and furthermore, updates the terminal device combination type stored in said management information to said received  
10      combination type.

8.      The terminal management device according to claim 7, wherein, in a case that there is no said match, upon receiving predetermined temporary change information together with an combination type sent from the terminal device, said communicating unit sends to the terminal device information corresponding to said received combination type, and does not update said management information.

20      9.      The terminal management device according to claim 1, wherein costs related to each terminal device are the purchasing costs of said terminal device.

25      10.     A terminal device capable of connecting to a network, said terminal device comprising:

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a storing unit storing an combination type of at  
the least one business entity bearing the costs related to  
the terminal device; and

5 a communicating unit sending an combination type  
stored in said storing unit with a network connection  
request to a predetermined server on the network.

11. The terminal device according to claim 10,  
further comprising:

10 an overwriting unit, when said communicating unit  
receives an combination type from said server, overwriting  
an combination type stored in said storing unit with said  
received combination type.

15 12. The terminal device according to claim 10,  
further comprising:

an overwriting unit, when said communicating unit  
receives an combination type from said server, comparing an  
combination type stored in said storing unit with said  
20 received combination type, and in a case that there is no  
match, overwriting the combination type stored in said  
storing unit with said received combination type.

13. The terminal device according to claim 10,  
25 wherein, when a predetermined combination type is read from  
a removable storage medium placed in the terminal device,  
said communicating unit sends the combination type read

from said removable storage medium instead of an combination type stored in said storing unit with a network connection request to a predetermined server on the network.

5           14. A management method for managing costs related to a terminal device, the method comprising the steps of:

              classifying each terminal device in accordance with an combination type of at the least one business entity bearing the costs related to each terminal device; and

10           10       managing a share of costs related to each terminal device based on said combination type.

15           15. A storage medium capable of being read by a computer, said storage medium storing a program comprising the steps of:

              classifying each terminal device connecting a network in accordance with an combination type of at the least one business entity bearing the costs related to each terminal device; and

20           20       managing a share of the costs related to each terminal device based on said combination type.

16. A storage medium capable of being read by a computer, said storage medium storing:

25           25       data of an combination type of at the least one business entity bearing the costs related to each terminal device connecting a network, and

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a program for sending said combination type with a  
network connection request to a predetermined server on the  
network.

5           17. A terminal management method for managing the  
cost of a terminal device capable of utilizing a service  
provided by a business entity, the method comprising the  
steps of:

10           managing the cost of a distributed said terminal  
device, and

15           in a case that a service capable of being utilized  
by said terminal device is added, managing the sharing of  
the cost of said distributed terminal device by the  
business entity providing the added service and a business  
entity providing an existing service.